



Multiple micronutrient supplementation implementation research in Nigeria

Optimizing adherence to maternal multiple micronutrient supplementation

BACKGROUND

In collaboration with the Government of Nigeria and Bauchi State, Nutrition International is supporting a three-year implementation research project on the transition from iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation to multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS) as part of antenatal care (ANC). Human-centered designed (HCD) strategies are being developed and tested to support the transition and optimize the uptake and adherence of MMS among pregnant women in Nigeria.

OUR PARTNERS

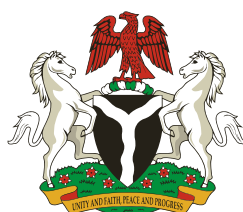
GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

(through the Federal Ministry of Health and National Primary Health Care Development Agency)

GOVERNMENT OF BAUCHI STATE

(through the State Ministry of Health and Bauchi State Primary Health Care Development Agency)

SONDER COLLECTIVE



Nourish Life



THE OPPORTUNITY

Antenatal MMS is more effective and cost-effective compared to IFA supplementation in improving maternal health.



Research has shown that antenatal MMS, a daily dose of 15 vitamins and minerals, is just as effective as IFA in preventing maternal anaemia and more effective at improving birth outcomes. However, to maximize the benefits of MMS, pregnant women must adopt the practice of taking MMS daily throughout pregnancy – often referred to as “adherence.” Even when pregnant women receive adequate quantities of maternal micronutrient supplements, they are not always consumed as recommended. This “adherence gap” is hindering program effectiveness and ultimately its impact on women’s nutrition.

We are undertaking implementation research to effectively introduce MMS as part of antenatal care for pregnant women.

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) released updated guidance, which recommended that implementation research be conducted in countries considering a transition from IFA supplementation to MMS. In line with the WHO’s recommendation, in 2021, the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health approved the use of MMS during pregnancy and called for implementation research in the updated *National Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Micronutrient Deficiencies in Nigeria*. Nutrition International is collaborating with the Governments of Nigeria and Bauchi State, and key stakeholders, to introduce MMS in select areas in Bauchi State as a means of progressing toward Nigeria’s national health and nutrition goals.

Together with the government, Nutrition International will:

- Implement a women-centered approach that considers the importance of gender dynamics and segmentation to improve adherence to MMS for vulnerable populations
- Build upon existing government ANC programming, initiatives and evidence-based best practices to reach women and their influencers
- Bring together nutrition, public health programming, HCD and implementation research expertise; and
- Provide ongoing learning and knowledge sharing.





This project is supporting three pillars of work over the three-year period:

- **PILLAR 1** focuses on the MMS project implementation, whereby all pregnant women accessing ANC services in the selected study sites will be given MMS instead of IFA supplements for the duration of their pregnancy alongside a “standard introduction package.” This will provide an opportunity to conduct the implementation research through the existing health system.
- **PILLAR 2** focuses on the implementation research including the design and testing of possible solutions and evaluation of their impact on adherence. A HCD approach, guided by Sonder Collective, will be used throughout the implementation research to identify effective approaches and solutions to improve pregnant women’s adherence to MMS, strengthen the ANC platform and improve gender-based outcomes. Process and outcome evaluations in addition to costing and cost-effectiveness studies will be conducted to assess the developed solutions’ feasibility, acceptability, sustainability, cost-effectiveness and impact on improving adherence.
- **PILLAR 3** focuses on strengthening the enabling environment for maternal nutrition and fostering an environment to act on the information generated from the research. Technical working groups at state and national level are being established to guide all phases of the implementation of MMS, implementation research and translation of results.

This research is based on government priorities, resources, capacity and scalability, and is driven by the voices of women in Nigeria. It is critical to explore solutions to long-standing implementation issues such as adherence and offers an opportunity to guide decision-making and ultimately a context-specific path to the scale-up of MMS.



THE IMPACT

Increasing adherence to MMS to accelerate maternal nutrition in Nigeria

This project explores the operational realities of transitioning from IFA supplements to MMS in Nigeria based on criteria such as acceptability, feasibility, sustainability and cost effectiveness. The findings will inform government decision making around the scale-up and operationalization of MMS as part of public ANC in Nigeria with a focus on how to understand and close the adherence gap to ultimately strengthen the country’s maternal nutrition programs and improve outcomes for women and their families.

ABOUT NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL

Nutrition International is a global nutrition organization headquartered in Ottawa, Canada. For 30 years, we have focused on delivering low-cost, high-impact, nutrition interventions to people in need. Working alongside governments as an expert ally, we combine deep technical expertise with a flexible approach, increasing impact without increasing complexity or cost. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life.

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For more information: MoMs@NutritionIntl.org





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